

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 1782

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, UN, SYG, AO, PO  
SUBJ: GOP AND ANGOLAN FUTURE

REF: USUN 900

SUMMARY: GOP REACTION TO CURRENT DEATH AND DISORDER IN ANGOLA  
DEMONSTRATES HOW PORTUGAL NEITHER HAS THE WILL NOR THE CAPABILITY  
OF MAJOR MILITARY INTERVENTION TO SAVE THE PRECARIOUS PEACE IN  
ANGOLA. END SUMMARY.

1. BECAUSE OF SERIOUS POLITICAL INSTABILITY AT HOME, CURRENT  
DEVELOPMENTS IN PORTUGAL'S EX-COLONIES ARE NOT GOP'S MAJOR  
SUBJECT OF ATTENTION. LISBON'S PAST AFRICAN WARS ARE  
POPULARLY REFERRED TO AS COLONIALIST ADVENTURES OF FASCIST  
REGIMES. GOP HAS ALSO MADE MUCH FANFARE OVER RAPID AFRICAN  
DECOLONIZATION. IN GOP VIEW BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE, JANUARY 1975  
ALVOR ACCORD OUTLINING FRAMEWORK FOR ANGOLAN FUTURE MARKED CLEARCUT  
BREAK IN PORTUGAL'S RESPONSIBILITY AND OBLIGATIONS IN EX-COLONY.  
(ALVOR ACCORD SET UP ANGOLAN TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT ON JANUARY  
31, 1975 AND SET DATE FOR COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE ON NOVEMBER 11,  
1975. ALL PORTUGUESE TROOPS IN EXCESS OF 24,000 MUST LEAVE  
ANGOLA BY APRIL 30, 1975 AND THE 24,000 REMAINING TROOPS MUST BE  
WITHDRAWN BY FEBRUARY 29, 1976. DATT ESTIMATES THAT 30,000 TO  
32,000 GOP TROOPS ARE STILL IN ANGOLA.)

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2. MARCH 24 GOP COMMUNIQUE IS NUTSHELL SUMMARY OF GOP ATTITUDE

TOWARDS MILITARY INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA. COMMUNIQUE IS SOLE OFFICIAL REACTION TO MOUNTING CRESCENDO OF KILLINGS AND VIOLENCE THAT BEGAN MARCH 23 BETWEEN MPLA AND FNLA FORCES MARKING MOST SERIOUS THREAT OF ANGOLAN CIVIL WAR TO DATE. COMMUNIQUE STATED IN PART: "THE PORTUGUESE ARMED FORCES ARE PERFECTLY CONSCIOUS OF THE MISSION THEY HAVE IN ANGOLA AND WITHOUT DOUBT WILL INTERVENE WHENEVER NECESSARY IN ORDER TO ASSURE INDISPENSABLE PEACE AND ORDER IN THE FULFILLMENT OF THE DEFINED OBJECTIVES OF THE ALVOR ACCORD." COMMUNIQUE WAS DEFENSIVE IN TONE AND SERVED AS GUARD AGAINST CHARGES SUCH AS THOSE LODGED BY MPLA SYMPATHIZERS IN LISBON ON MARCH 26 THAT GOP ARMY HAS REMAINED PASSIVE IN CRUCIAL SITUATION. SECOND EXAMPLE OF GOP DESIRE TO LIMIT INVOLVEMENT IN ANGOLA IS GOP INSISTENT CHARACTERIZATION OF MARCH 27 VISIT BY NEW FOREIGN MINISTER MELO ANTUNES AND MINISTER OF INTERTERRITORIAL COORDINATION ALMEIDA SANTOS AS "ROUTINE."

3. SHOULD MPLA-FNLA-UNITA COALITION HOLD UP UNTIL INDEPENDENCE, GOP WOULD WELCOME DECOLONIZATION "SUCCESS" AND CONSIDER ANY DISTURBANCES AFTER NOVEMBER AS A "DOMESTIC AFFAIR." IF CIVIL WAR SHOULD ERUPE BEFORE NOVEMBER, PSYCHOLOGICAL CLIMATE IN PORTUGAL IS SUCH THAT GOP WOULD NOT ASSUME ULTIMATE RESPONSIBILITY IN LIEU OF STRICT ADHERENCE TO ALVOR ACCORD. (GOP MAY SEND TROOPS OUT ON PATROLS IF NECESSARY BUT PROBABLY WILL NOT COMMIT THEM TO ANY MAJOR ENGAGEMENT.) ACTION TO CONTRARY WOULD RAISE SPECTER OF INDEFINITE INVOLVEMENT IN ANGOLAN POLITICAL SWAMP.)

4. EVEN IN THE IMPROBABLY EVEN THAT GOP DECIDED TO RISK TROOPS IN MAJOR ACTION FOR SAKE OF CIVIL ORDER IN AFRICA, IT MAY REASONABLY BE ASSUMED THAT PORTUGUESE TROOPS WOULD NOT OBEY THE ORDER. INDISCIPLINE IS A SERIOUS AND MOUNTING PROBLEM IN THE PORTUGUESE ARMY AND PAST EXPERIENCE IN GUINEA-BISSAU HAS INDICATED THAT ONCE THE DECISION TO FREE A COLONY HAS BEEN TAKEN, TROOPS WILL NOT RISK THEIR NECKS FOR THE SAKE OF LAW AND ORDER. IN MANY CASES, THIS ASSUMPTION MAY EVEN EXTEND TO PROTECTION OF ANGOLAN WHITES.

5. CHIEF OF NAVAL STAFF AND MEMBER OF REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL  
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PINHEIRO AZEVEDO INFORMED DATT MARCH 27 THAT IF CIVIL WAR BREAKS OUT IN ANGOLA, IT MIGHT NOT BE A BAD THING. AZEVEDO SAID THE THREE-PARTY COALITION WAS UNREALISTIC AND THAT A CIVIL WAR WOULD ELIMINATE THE WEEK AND PAVE THE WAY FOR A ONE-PARTY STATE AS IN MOZAMBIQUE. AZEVEDO WAS EXPRESSING PURELY PERSONAL VIEW.  
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